

Message Text

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50

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DLOS-07 IO-14 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07

H-03 INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01

SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 ACDA-19 DRC-01 /131 W

----- 091066

R 230143Z JUL 74 ZDK

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4985

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC

COMNAVFORK

COMUSK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 4748

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS KS KN

SUBJECT: WEST COAST AGENT BOAT INCIDENT

REF: A. COMNAVFORK 191951Z JUL 74 B. COMNAVFORK 192133Z

JUL 74 C. COMNAVFORK 192335Z JUL 74.

D. COMNAVFORK 200931Z JUL 74

1. KNOWN FACTS REGARDING AGENT BOAT INCIDENT ARE REPORTED IN REFTELS. IN BRIEF, IT APPEARS THAT SMALL THREE TO FIVE TON NORTH KOREAN AGENT BOAT PROCEEDING WESTERLY AT 20 TO 25 KNOTS WAS SPOTTED BY ROKN PATROL CRAFT JUST BEFORE MIDNIGHT LOCAL TIME JULY 19. KN BOAT WAS 31 MILES WEST OF ISLAND OF OCHONG-DO IN YELLOW SEA, (36- 19.5 NORTH; 125 - 17.3 EAST). PCE LOST CONTACT BUT THIS WAS SUBSEQUENTLY REESTABLISHED BY ROK DESTROYER. AFTER DESTROYER FIRED ILLUMINATION (STAR) SHELLS FOR IDENTIFICATION, ACCORDING TO ROK CAPTAIN'S REPORT, DPRK AGENT BOAT OPENED FIRE, WAS THEN PURSUED, HIT, AND WAS STOPPED DEAD IN THE WATER AT POINT APPROXIMATELY 130 MILES WEST OF OCHONG-DO (36 - 13.8 NORTH, 123 -12 EAST) AT ABOUT 0530 LOCAL. BOAT, EQUIPMENT (AND BODIES)

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RECOVERED IN DAMAGED CONDITION. NO SURVIVORS. BOAT

HAS BEEN TOWED TO SHORE AT INCHON. BOAT AND EQUIPMENT CONFORM TO THOSE CAPTURED IN PAST YEARS, MOST RECENTLY 1970.

2. IN MORNING IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THESE EVENTS, UNC COMMANDER CALLED ON DEFENSE MINISTER SUH AND URGED THAT MND NOT PUT OUT ANY MISSTATEMENT OF FACTS. HOWEVER, MINUTES EARLIER MND AT 0840 ISSUED PRESS RELEASE WHICH, WHILE OTHERWISE ACCURATE, CLAIMED AGENT BOAT WAS INITIALLY SPOTTED AT A POINT TWO AND ONE-HALF MILES WEST OF OCHONG-DO THIS IS NOT CONFIRMED BY ROKN REPORTS, AND WE HAVE NO EVIDENCE THAT AGENT BOAT EVER CAME THIS CLOSE TO ISLAND.

3. CINCUNC ALSO ASKED MND NOT TO TAKE UNILATERAL OR OTHER ACTION TO PRE-EMPT UNCMAC'S DECISION RE MAC MEETING. MND HAS IN FACT NOT DONE SO. ROKS HAVE BEEN PRESSING STRONGLY FOR MAC PROTEST, BUT PAST PRECEDENT AND CURRENT EVIDENCE DO NOT APPEAR TO BE IN FAVOR OF SUCH ACTION, SINCE BOAT WAS NOT DETECTED IN CONTIGUOUS WATERS. THIS SUBJECT IS STILL UNDER DISCUSSION. IN ANY EVENT, MAC OFFICERS HAVE EXAMINED CAPTURED BOAT, AND WILL BE PREPARED TO RESPOND TO ANY DPRK CHALLENGES ON SUBJECT.

HABIB

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NNN

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